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Spy Defector Reveals Red Forgeries

'Disinformation'
Department Faked
2 Newsweek Issues

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House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mendel Rivers (D-S.C.), who shares with the President the secrets of the CIA yesterday produced the life story of a Communist spy and his revelations on the mysterious "Department of Disinformation."

The spy's name is Laszlo Szabo, a 40-year-old Hungarian, who defected last fall and who has since given the Rivers committee—and presumably the CIA—a running account of his 20-year career as a security and intelligence agent.

One of his original revelations was that the Hungarians had secretly forged and distributed to Asian and African diplomats two issues of Newsweek magazine in the fall of 1963. They contained slanted versions of American policies and were mailed out by agents who wore "rubber gloves . . . so as not to leave fingerprints in handling and sticking on stamps."

This was not the first reference to the so-called "Department of Disinformation" behind the Iron Curtain. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover charged last fall that he had been the target of that Department. He said it had sent out forged letters linking him to former White House aide Walter Jenkins. The letters, said Hoover, were "part of a concerted Communist smear

campaign" carried out by the Soviet Disinformation Department.

Szabo, in his report to the Rivers committee, said the disinformation operation works in this way:

"They preferred that an item for disinformation should have some real basis, be based on facts, but if I can produce a good idea that does not have any fact I send it in anyway. Truth is not important if the idea is good. Just send it in. They will make it look truthful, then get it published in some little paper somewhere."

A phony letter to an Arab leader, Szabo claimed, caused the arrest of another prominent Arab figure, which in turn caused "a breakdown between the Arab leader and (a) Western country."

One of Szabo's specific "disinformation" assignments, he said, was to come up with ideas to cause friction between the United States and the United Kingdom and "to undermine the relations between the United States and other Western countries."

Szabo described himself as a reluctant and weak-kneed recruit to the Hungarian espionage apparatus.

"I did not have the personal bravery . . . to turn in any other direction," he said.

" . . . I was a member of a very cruel and inhuman organization. But I never did anything criminal, I never fired a gun at a man during my service, and I never initiated any cases against innocent people. My soul is clear before God . . ."

His account of the routine functions of a Communist spy was as undramatic as most such accounts—American diplomats in Communist capitals are trailed, efforts are made to get secrets out of embassies, there is always a demand for new agents and some are recruited through blackmail techniques.

One of his statements, however, shed new light on the American CIA's coup in obtaining a copy of the famous speech in which former Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev first denounced Stalin and Stalinism.

Szabo said thousands of copies of the speech were available in Hungary and were "passed around secretly."

Rivers did not explain yesterday how his committee happened to stumble onto the Szabo case but he said "hardly a day passes that a representative of the CIA does not visit my office and the offices of some of the other members of the CIA Subcommittee. It is a continuous association . . ."